

Berrow with Pendock, Eldersfield, Birtsmorton and Hollybush



1st. Sunday of Christmas

Welcome-do have a candle, glass of juice/wine and cracker/piece of bread ready

HYMN

OPENING PRAYER

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you all
and also with you.

**Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Christ the light of the world
has come to dispel the darkness of our hearts.
In his light let us examine ourselves
and confess our sins.

THE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.**

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**We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us, forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of
your name.
Amen.**

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

THE COLLECT

Almighty God,
who wonderfully created us in your own image
and yet more wonderfully restored us
through your Son Jesus Christ:

grant that, as he came to share in our humanity,
 so we may share the life of his divinity;
 who is alive and reigns with you,
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

READINGS: Galatians 4.4-7, Luke 2. 15-21

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

(Please read Isaiah 61.10-62.3 at home)

REFLECTION

This Christmastide, we hear the Apostle Paul say we are "children of God." That is Good News! But this year when few families can be together, when children and grandchildren are apart because of Covid 19, it feels different to proclaim this. We haven't driven for miles to get together. We might Zoom one another or chat on the telephone. But many family traditions, both happy and sad—may be on hold. Board games have been postponed even for those gathered in their support bubbles. Not everyone has happy memories of childhood, but Christmas can be magical time for many, with much laughter and joy. Certainly, for those children experiencing Christmas for the first time, many parents will try to make it special.

That's why it's important to be clear when we look at the scripture we hear today from Paul as he writes to the Galatians. He says: "because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir through God."

Paul sees being a child here as wonderful news. He is using metaphorical language to describe us all being adopted as children of God.

Here in Christmastide, we are celebrating the very incarnation-- Emmanuel--"God with us."

Many things can enslave us: anxiety... depression...the hardship of broken relationships...the abject panic that accompanies financial troubles... greed... jealousy ... pettiness... the reality of heartache.

But what Jesus--God incarnate-- What Jesus offers, out of LOVE for us-- is freedom from that slavery. FREEDOM is a major component of the Good News.

When Jesus was a baby and it came time for the purification according to the Law of Moses, Mary and Joseph took him to Jerusalem. This presentation at the temple was part of the Torah that all faithful Jews followed--and Mary and Joseph were faithful.

One of the beautiful parts of this story from the Gospel of Luke is that of Simeon. He is described as "righteous and devout" and the Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah.

So when he saw Mary and Joseph bring the baby Jesus into the temple for the presentation, Simeon took the baby in his arms and praised God. His moment had come.

Simeon was no longer a slave to his anxieties. He was a servant to fear no more. "You are dismissing your servant *in peace* according to your word," he proclaimed to all. Wherever we are this year, we were witnessing once again the baby Jesus being held aloft by Simeon over and over again.

It occurs to me that the presentation of the Christ happens for us here every time we gather. It happens when we love one another, pray for one another, serve one another, and support one another. This is how we are set free from those things that keep us from truly living. This is how we know we are the children of a God who IS love and the best way to be free us from this slavery.

As of us have those great moments in life, those special moments that we remember with great feeling. There are those few and rare moments in life that are enormously special for us. Usually, they have to do with marriage, birth, death, a special trip, an award. All of us have had those

great moments of life that are then retold again and again and again. Those special moments become part of your family history. Let us make a special memory for ourselves this Christmas 2020

At Christmas time, we celebrate that God came to us in the flesh of the baby Jesus. We are the adopted children of God here today. One of the greatest blessings of life is when someone loves you back. Nothing gives God greater satisfaction than when you and I, as God's adopted children, love God back.

God has adopted us into his family by our baptism and we are God's very own and God takes immeasurable pleasure in sharing life and watching us grow through all the life stages. Nothing gives God more pleasure than to watch us mature and grow through life, being at our side always.

God gives us our inheritance. When we die, we receive the gift of eternal life and we live for an infinity with God.

There is no one in the world who loves you more than God loves you. And that is the real benefit we receive in adoption. We know that we belong to God and God's family. I belong and that is part of the immense, immeasurable blessings of being adopted into the family of God, the real inheritance which is eternal life and eternal love with God.

Jesus doesn't stay in a manger, a little baby who can't speak. No. He grows up. He speaks. He heals . He challenges.

“Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation!” Then Simeon blessed Joseph and Mary and said to her, **“Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed”**

The Son of God, in human weakness, conquered all the powers of sin, death, and hell that were arrayed against him. He is opposed, yet ever stands victorious. Thank God that the Gospel of Jesus Christ has the power to save sinners, such as you and me. Thank God that Christ, for all our opposition, breaks through by the power of his Word. As we gather, we may truly say with Simeon, **“Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation!” Amen.**

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PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Please ask for any additional prayers

**Merciful Father,
accept these prayers for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray with confidence
as our Saviour taught us.

**Our Father,
which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done ;
in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil;
for thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

THE PEACE

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.
He is Christ the Saviour
and his name shall be called 'The Prince of Peace'.
Of the increase of his government
and of peace there shall be no end.

The peace of the Lord be always with you
and also with you.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
 creator of heaven and earth.
 I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
 who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
 born of the Virgin Mary,
 suffered under Pontius Pilate,
 was crucified, died, and was buried;
 he descended to the dead.
 On the third day he rose again;
 he ascended into heaven,
 he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
 and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
 I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the holy catholic Church,
 the communion of saints,
 the forgiveness of sins,
 the resurrection of the body,
 and the life everlasting.
 Amen.

THE OFFERTORY PRAYER

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation: through your goodness we
 have this bread to set before you, which earth has given and human
 hands have made.
 It will become for us the bread of life.
Blessed be God for ever.

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,
 through your goodness we have this wine to set before you, fruit of the
 vine and work of human hands.
 It will become for us the cup of salvation.
Blessed be God for ever.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

Here is the table set for a special meal.

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere, mighty creator,
ever-living God.

We give you thanks and praise for your Son,

our Saviour Jesus Christ, who for love of our fallen race humbled
himself,

was born of the Virgin Mary by the power of your Spirit, and lived as one
of us.

In this mystery of the Word made flesh

you have caused his light to shine in our hearts,

to give knowledge of your glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

In him we see our God made visible

and so are caught up in the love of the God we cannot see.

Therefore with all the angels of heaven

we lift our voices to proclaim the glory of your name

and sing our joyful hymn of praise:

Holy, holy, holy Lord,

God of power and might,

heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Father of all, we give you thanks for every gift that comes from heaven.

To the darkness Jesus came as your light.

With signs of faith and words of hope

he touched untouchables with love

and washed the guilty clean.

The crowds came out to see your Son,

yet at the end they turned on him.

On the night he was betrayed
he came to table with his friends
to celebrate the freedom of your people.

Jesus blessed you, Father, for the food;
he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said:
This is my body, given for you all.

Jesus then gave thanks for the wine;
he took the cup, gave it and said:
This is my blood, shed for you all for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this in remembrance of me.

Therefore, Father, with this bread and this cup
we celebrate the cross
on which he died to set us free.
Defying death he rose again
and is alive with you to plead for us and all the world.

Send your Spirit on us now
that by these gifts we may feed on Christ with opened eyes and hearts
on fire.

May we and all who share this food
offer ourselves to live for you
and be welcomed at your feast in heaven where all creation worships
you,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit:
**Blessing and honour and glory and power
be yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.
Therefore let us keep the feast

(consume)

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Heavenly Father,
whose blessed Son shared at Nazareth
the life of an earthly home:

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help your Church to live as one family,
 united in love and obedience,
 and bring us all at last to our home in heaven;
 through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

We thank you, Lord, that you have fed us in this physical and spiritual sacrament, united us with Christ, and given us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet prepared for all peoples. Amen.

HYMN

THE BLESSING

May the joy of the angels,
 the eagerness of the shepherds,
 the perseverance of the wise men,
 the obedience of Joseph and Mary,
 and the peace of the Christ child be
 yours this Christmas.
 And the blessing of God almighty,
 the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
 be upon you and remain with you always.
Amen

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen